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LORD CH—M's SPEECH, &c.

House of Lords, Nov. 22, 1770.

THE Duke of Richmond moved that an address might be presented to the King, that his Majesty might give orders for laying before the House all Letters and papers received by the ministry between the 12th of September 1769, and the 12th of September, 1770, containing any intelligence of hostilities commenced or intended to be commenced by the Court of Spain, or any of their officers, against any of his Majesty's dominions; and the times at which such intelligence was received.

The motion was opposed by Lord Weymouth upon the general ground of the impropriety of their calling for such papers while the matter in question was the subject of a negotiation with the Spanish Ambassador.—His Lordship carefully avoided giving the least light, or intimation whatsoever concerning the actual state, or progress of that negotiation, and expressed himself with caution, and reserve

reserve. He concluded with moving that the previous question might be put.

The Duke of Richmond supported his motion by a train of facts, for the truth of which he repeatedly appealed to the ministry themselves, and by a strength, and clearness of argument, which none of the other party even attempted to weaken or oppose. The main stress of his discourse seemed to rest upon the following facts ; that, on the third of last June, the Tamer sloop arrived at Plymouth, and brought an account that a Spanish squadron had appeared off Falkland Island, and ordered our people to depart ; that this was a clear commencement of hostilities,—that from the third of June, to the 12th of September, (above three months) when our garrison arrived on board the Favourite, it did not appear that the ministry had taken any step whatsoever for obtaining redress, or to put the nation in a state of defence ;—that the first orders for equipping a fleet were given on or after the 12th of September ;—that this armament, such as it was, had not yet produced any visible effect ;—that, since the 12th of September, near three months had elapsed, and still they were told, “ *that the affair was in negotiation, that the negotiation was still depending* ;”—in that time three messengers had arrived from Madrid, and particularly one last Monday ; and although three days had since passed, no communication had yet been made to parliament of the intelligence he brought, or what was the final answer of the court of Spain,—that the terms of the motion plainly obviated the objection made by Lord Weymouth, of its tending to impede a negotiation now depending ; since it did not call for any papers of a date subsequent to the notice received by the ministry of the hostility being actually committed ; consequently could not reach to any letters written, or received, or to any
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negotiation entered into, after the receipt of that notice ;—that he meant only to obtain for the house some accurate information of circumstances leading to, and accounting for a fact, which was itself notorious and undisputed ;—His Grace went largely into the consideration of the disgrace, and infamy of suffering the honour of the crown, and the rights of the people of England to be so long the subject of negotiation ;—the folly, or treachery of the king's servants in not accepting of the augmentation of seamen proposed and urged by the Lords in opposition, early in the last session, when a proposal for strengthening the hands of government had been rejected merely because it came from that quarter ;—their supineness or treachery, in not arming early in June, when they heard of our people being warned to quit the Island, by a military force threatening compulsion ;—and lastly the feebleness and slow progress of the armament they had made, and the disgraceful situation of the king, who stood with a public affront, and dishonour fixed upon his crown, and without any attempt made, in the course of almost six months, to wipe it away. His Grace observed, that the hostile intentions of Spain were not only declared by the open hostility itself, but confirmed by two extraordinary facts, which he stated to the House, and which, after repeated appeals, stood uncontradicted by the ministry. He said that, after the Spaniards had taken possession of Port Egmont, they did not suffer the Garrison to depart immediately, but took away the rudder of his Majesty's ship, and detained her by force for the space of twenty days ;—that supposing they had a claim to the island, they had none to the King's ship ; and detaining her was an express violation of treaty, by which, even in the case of an open rupture, six months are allowed to the subjects of each nation to remove their persons

sons and property from the dominions of the other —The other fact seemed, and was urged as still more important. He asserted that he had intelligence not to be doubted, that, at this moment, there are in the several Spanish prisons not less than three thousand British seamen, (particularly at Ceuta on the coast of Africa) who had been taken out of our merchant ships by Spanish Guarda Costas, and condemned to perpetual slavery, or confinement. He then quoted a strong instance since the peace, and read the original letters relating to it, where five of our seamen had been demanded by one of our Admirals, and had been refused by a Spanish Admiral, and Governor, who had expressed a willingness to oblige him, but alledged that it would be a breach of their orders, and instructions.

These were the principal materials of his Grace's speech. The several parts were filled up with judicious, and pointed observations, expressed in a clear, nervous language, and delivered with plainness and dignity,—

Lord Hillsborough took up the argument upon the same footing with Lord Weymouth, but carried it much farther than his Lordship had done. He informed the House that he knew the contents of the papers called for, therefore could assert upon knowledge, that the production of them at that time would tend greatly to embarrass a negotiation already in a prosperous train, and which promised an happy conclusion ;— He insisted much upon the delicacy of Spanish honour ;—that it was their national characteristic ;—that infinite regard, and tenderness, ought to be shewn to the punctilios of that court,—and begged of the noble Lords to consider how far those punctilios might unavoidably retard and embarrass a treaty of this nature ;—that, as the Messenger only arrived on Monday morning, the Spanish Ambassador probably had not had

had time to make himself master of his dispatches, nor to determine upon the form and manner, in which he should execute his instructions. The remainder of his speech, which was delivered in very high terms, and with a tone elevated above the pomp of tragedy, turned intirely upon the flourishing state of this country, and the prudence, vigour and vigilance of his Majesty's servants.

EARL OF CHATHAM

MY LORDS,

I rise to give my hearty assent to the motion made by the noble Duke;—by his Grace's favour, I have been permitted to see it, before it was offered to the House. I have fully considered the necessity of obtaining from the King's servants a communication of the papers described in the motion, and I am persuaded that the alarming state of facts, as well as the strength of reasoning, with which the noble Duke has urged, and enforced that necessity, must have been powerfully felt by your Lordships;—what I mean to say, upon this occasion, may seem perhaps to extend beyond the limits of the motion before us. But I flatter myself, my Lords, that if I am honoured with your attention, it will appear that the meaning and object of this question are naturally connected with considerations of the most extensive, national importance. For entering into such considerations, no season is improper; no occasion should be neglected. Something must be done, my Lords, and immediately, to save an injured, insulted, undone country. If not to save the State, my Lords, at least to mark out, and drag to public justice those servants of the crown, by whose ignorance, neglect, or treachery, this once great, once flourishing people, are reduced to a condition as deplorable at home, as it is despicable abroad. Examples are
wanted,

my Lords, and should be given to the world, for the instruction of future times, even though they be useless to ourselves. I do not mean, my Lords, nor is it intended by the motion, to impede, or embarrass a negotiation, which we have been told is now in a prosperous train, and promises a happy conclusion.

LORD WEYMOUTH.

MY LORDS,

I beg pardon for interrupting the noble Lord, but I think it necessary to remark to your Lordships, that I have not said a single word tending to convey to your Lordships any information, or opinion, with regard to the state, or progress of the negotiation—I did, with the utmost caution, avoid giving to your Lordships the least intimation upon that matter.

EARL OF CHATHAM.

MY LORDS,

I perfectly agree with the noble Lord. I did not mean to refer to any thing said by his Lordship. He expressed himself, as he always does, with moderation, and reserve, and with the greatest propriety;—it was another noble Lord, very high in office, who told us he understood that the negotiation was in a favourable train.

EARL OF HILLSBOROUGH.

MY LORDS,

I did not make use of the word *Train*. I know the meaning of the word too well. In the language, from which it is derived, it signifies protraction, and delay, which I could never mean to apply to the present negotiation.

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EARL OF CHATHAM.

MY LORDS,

This is the second time that I have been interrupted. I submit it to your Lordships whether this be fair, and candid treatment. I am sure it is contrary to the orders of the House, and a gross violation of decency, and politeness. I listen to every noble Lord in this House with attention, and respect. The noble Lord's design in interrupting me, is as mean, and unworthy, as the manner, in which he has done it, is irregular and disorderly. He flatters himself that, by breaking the thread of my discourse, he shall confuse me in my argument. But, my Lords, I will not submit to this treatment. I will not be interrupted. When I have concluded, let him answer me if he can.—As to the word, which he has denied, I still affirm that it was the word he made use of; but, if he had used any other, I am sure every noble Lord will agree with me, that his meaning was exactly what I expressed it. Whether he said *course*, or *train* is indifferent—He told your Lordships that the negotiation was in a way that promised a happy, and honourable conclusion. His distinctions are mean, frivolous, and puerile. My Lords,—I do not understand the exalted tone assumed by that noble Lord. In the distress, and weakness of this country, my Lords, and conscious as the ministry ought to be how much they have contributed to that distress, and weakness, I think a tone of modesty, of submission, of humility, would become them better; *quædam causæ modestiam desiderant*. Before this country they stand as the greatest criminals. Such I shall prove them to be; for I do not doubt of proving, to your Lordships satisfaction, that since they have been entrusted with the conduct of the King's affairs, they have done every thing that they ought not to have done and hardly

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any thing that they ought to have done.—The noble Lord talks of Spanish punctilios in the lofty style and idiom of a Spaniard. We are to be wonderfully tender of the Spanish point of Honour, as if *they* had been the complainants, as if *they* had received the injury. I think he would have done better to have told us, what care had been taken of the English honour. My Lords, I am well acquainted with the character of that nation, at least as far as it is represented by their court and ministry, and should think this country dishonoured by a comparison of the English good faith with the punctilios of a Spaniard. My Lords, the English are a candid, an ingenuous people ; the Spaniards are as mean, and crafty, as they are proud and insolent. The integrity of the English merchant, the generous spirit of our naval, and military officers, would be degraded by a comparison with *their* merchants, or officers. With their ministers I have often been obliged to negotiate, and never met with an instance of candor, or dignity, in their proceedings ;—nothing but low cunning, trick, and artifice ;—after a long experience of their want of candor, and good faith, I found myself compelled to talk to them in a peremptory, decisive language. On this principle I submitted my advice to a trembling council for an immediate declaration of a war with Spain. Your Lordships well know what were the consequences of not following that advice.—Since, however, for reasons unknown to me, it has been thought advisable to negotiate with the Court of Spain, I should have conceived that the great, and single object of such a negotiation, would have been, to have obtained compleat satisfaction for the injury done to the crown, and people of England. But, if I understand the noble Lord, the only object of the present negotiation is to find a salvo for the punctilious honour of the Spaniards.

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The absurdity of such an idea is of itself insupportable. But, my Lords, I object to our negotiating at all, in our present circumstances. We are not in that situation in which a great, and powerful nation is permitted to negotiate.—A foreign power has forcibly robbed his Majesty of a part of his dominions. Is the island restored?—Are you replaced in statu quo?—If that had been done, it might then perhaps have been justifiable to treat with the aggressor upon the satisfaction he ought to make for the insult offered to the crown of England. But will you descend so low, will you so shamefully betray the King's Honour, as to make it matter of negotiation whether his Majesty's possessions shall be restored to him or not?—I doubt not, my Lords, that there are some important mysteries in the conduct of this affair, which, whenever they are explained, will account for the profound silence now observed by the King's servants.—The time will come, my Lords, when they shall be dragged from their concealments. There are some questions which, sooner or later, must be answered.—The Ministry, I find, without declaring themselves explicitly, have taken pains to possess the public with an opinion, that the Spanish Court have constantly disavowed the proceedings of their Governor; and some persons, I see, have been shameless and daring enough to advise his Majesty to support and countenance this opinion in his speech from the throne.—Certainly, my Lords, there never was a more odious, a more infamous falsehood imposed on a great nation.—It degrades the King's honour.—It is an insult to parliament.—His Majesty has been advised to confirm, and give currency to AN ABSOLUTE FALSHOOD. I beg your Lordships attention, and I hope I shall be understood, when I repeat, that the Court of Spain's having disavowed the act of their Governor is an

ABSOLUTE, A PALPABLE FALSHOOD.—Let me ask, my Lords, when the first communication was made by the Court of Madrid, of their being apprised of the taking of Falkland Islands, was it accompanied with an offer of restitution instant,—of immediate satisfaction, and the punishment of the Spanish Governor. If it was not, they have adopted the act as their own, and the very mention of a disavowal is an impudent insult offered to the King's dignity. The King of Spain disowns the thief, while he leaves him unpunished, and profits by the theft—in vulgar English, he is the receiver of stolen goods, and ought to be treated accordingly.

If your Lordships will look back to a period of the English history, in which the circumstances are reversed, in which the Spaniards were the complainants, you will see how differently *they* succeeded:—You will see one of the ablest men, one of the bravest officers this, or any other country ever produced (it is hardly necessary to mention the name of Sir Walter Raleigh) sacrificed by the meanest Prince that ever sat upon this throne, to the vindictive jealousy of that haughty court. James the First was base enough, at the instance of Gondomar, to suffer a sentence against Sir Walter Raleigh, for another supposed offence, to be carried into execution almost twelve years after it had been passed.—This was the pretence.—His real crime was, that he had mortally offended the Spaniards, while he acted by the King's express orders, and under his commission.

My Lords, the pretended disavowal by the court of Spain is as ridiculous as it is false.—If your Lordships want any other proof, call for your own officers, who were stationed at Falkland Island.—Ask the officer who commanded the garrison, whether, when he was summoned to surrender, the demand was made in name of the Governor of Buenos

enos Ayres, or of his Catholic Majesty?—Was the island said to belong to Don Francisco Bucarelli, or to the King of Spain?—If I am not mistaken we have been in possession of these islands since the year 1764, or 1765.—Will the ministry assert that, in all that time, the Spanish court have never once claimed them?—that their right to them has never been urged, or mentioned to our ministry? If it has, the act of the Governor of Buenos Ayres is plainly the consequence of our refusal to acknowledge, and submit to the Spanish claims.—For five years they negotiate—When that fails, they take the island by force. If that measure had arisen out of the general instructions, constantly given to the Governor of Buenos Ayres, why should the execution of it have been deferred so long?—

My Lords, if the falshood of this pretended disavowed had been confined to the court of Spain, I should have admitted it without concern. I should have been content that they themselves had left a door open for excuse, and accommodation. The King of England's honour is not touched 'till he adopts the falshood, delivers it to his parliament, and makes it his own. I cannot quit this subject without comparing the conduct of the present ministry with that of a gentleman, (Mr. George Grenville,) who is now no more. The occasions were similar.—The French had taken a little island from us called Turk's Island.—The minister, then at the head of the treasury, took the business upon himself;—but he did not negotiate;—he sent for the French Ambassador and made a peremptory demand.—A courier was dispatched to Paris, and returned, in a few days, with orders for instant restitution, not only of the island, but of every thing that the English subjects had lost.

Such then, my Lords, are the circumstances of our difference with Spain; and, in this situation,
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we are told that a negotiation has been entered into ;—That this negotiation which must have commenced near three months ago, is still depending, and that any insight into the actual state of it will impede the conclusion.—My Lords, I am not, for my own part, very anxious to draw from the ministry the information, which they take so much care to conceal from us. I very well know where this honourable negotiation *will* end ; where it *must* end.—We may perhaps be able to patch up an accommodation for the present, but we shall have a Spanish war in six months.—Some of your Lordships may perhaps remember the convention.—For several successive years our merchants had been plundered—no protection given them ; no redress obtained for them ;—during all that time we were contented to complain, and to negotiate ;—the Court of Madrid were then as ready to disown their officers, and as unwilling to punish them, as they are at present. Whatever violence happened was always laid to the charge of one or other of their West India Governors. To day it was the Governor of Cuba, to-morrow of Porto Rico, Carthagena, or Porto Bello. If, in a particular instance, redress was promised, how was that promise kept ? The Merchant, who had been robbed of his property, was sent for a compensation to the West Indies, to get it, if he could, out of an empty chest. At last the convention was made ; but, though approved by a majority of both Houses, was received by the nation with universal discontent. I myself heard that wise man, (Sir Robert Walpole) say in the House of Commons. “ ’Tis true we have got a convention and a vote of Parliament ; but what signifies it, we shall have a Spanish war upon the back of our convention.”—Here, my Lords, I cannot help mentioning a very striking observation

tion made to me by a noble Lord, (the late Lord Granville) since dead.—His abilities did honour to this house, and to this nation. In the upper departments of Government he had not his equal; and I feel a pride in declaring, that to his patronage, to his friendship, and instruction, I owe whatever I am.—This great man has often observed to me that, in all the negociations which preceded the convention, our ministers never found out that there was no ground, or subject for *any* negociation.—That the Spaniards had not a right to search our ships, and when they attempted to regulate that right by treaty, they were regulating a thing, which did not exist. This I take to be something like the case of the ministry. The Spaniards have seized an island they have no right to, and his Majesty's servants make it matter of negociation, whether his dominions shall be restored to him, or not.

From what I have said, my Lords, I do not doubt but it will be understood by many Lords, and given out to the public, that I am for hurrying the nation, at all events, into a war with Spain. My Lords, I disclaim such counsels, and I beg that this declaration may be remembered—Let us have peace, my Lords, but let it be honourable, let it be secure. A patched up peace will not do. It will not satisfy the nation, though it may be approved of by parliament.—I distinguish widely between a solid peace, and the disgraceful expedients, by which a war may be deferred, but cannot be avoided. I am as tender of the effusion of human blood, as the noble Lord who dwelt so long upon the miseries of war. If the bloody politics of some noble Lords had been followed; England, and every quarter of his majesty's dominions would have been glutted with blood—the blood of our own countrymen—

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My Lords, I have better reasons perhaps than many of your Lordships for desiring peace upon the terms I have described.—I know the strength, and preparation of the House of Bourbon—I know the defenceless, unprepared condition of this country.—I know by what mismanagements we are reduced to this situation; and when I consider, who are the men by whom a war, in the outset at least, must be conducted, can I but wish for peace?—My Lords I do not pretend to any extraordinary, secret intelligence, nor to possess any prophetic powers;—neither am I entirely destitute of information.—But you may trust to the experience of an old man, when I assure you, that a wise minister will draw more solid intelligence from his own observation, and reflections, than any he can procure from Spies, or ambassadors abroad. That great usurper Oliver Cromwell was supposed to have better, and more exact intelligence of what passed abroad, than any sovereign in his time.—Where did he procure his information?—My Lords, he found it in his own sagacity. He observed facts, and traced them forward to their consequences.—From what was, he concluded what must be, and he never was deceived.—In the present situation of affairs, I think it would be treachery to the nation to conceal from them their real circumstances, and, with respect to a foreign enemy, I know that all concealments are vain and useless. They are as well acquainted with the actual force, and weakness of this country, as any of the King's servants.—This is no time for silence, or reserve.—I charge the ministers with the highest crimes that men in their stations can be guilty of.—I charge them with having destroyed all content, and unanimity at home, by a series of oppressive, unconstitutional measures, and with having betrayed, and delivered

livered up the nation defenceless to a foreign enemy. even yet!

Their utmost vigor has reached no farther than to a fruitless, protracted negotiation.—When they should have acted, they have contented themselves with talking *about it, Goddes, and about it*—If we do not stand forth, and do our duty in the present crisis, the nation is irretrievably undone.—I despise the little policy of concealments.—You ought to know the whole of your situation.—If the information be new to the ministry, let them take care to profit by it. I mean to rouse, to alarm the whole nation—to rouse the ministry, if possible who seem awake to nothing but the preservation of their places;—to awaken the King.

Early in the last spring, a motion was made in parliament for enquiring into the state of the navy, and an augmentation of six thousand seamen was offered to the ministry. They refused to give us any insight into the condition of the navy, and rejected the augmentation. Early in June they received advice of a commencement of hostilities by a Spanish armament, which had warned the King's garrison to quit an island belonging to his Majesty. From that to the 12th of September, as if nothing had happened, they lay dormant. Not a man was raised, not a single ship put into commission. From the 12th of September, when they had heard of the blow being actually struck, we are to date the beginning of their preparations for defence. Let us now enquire, my Lords, what expedition they have used, what vigour they have exerted. We have heard wonders of the diligence employed in impressing, of the large bounties offered, and the number of ships put into commission. These have been, for some time past, the constant topics of ministerial boast and triumph. Without regarding the description, let us look to

the substance. I tell your Lordships that, with all this vigour and expedition, they have not, in a period of considerably more than two months, raised ten thousand seamen. I mention that number, meaning to speak largely, tho' in my own breast I am convinced that the number does not exceed eight thousand. But it is said they have ordered forty ships of the line into commission. My Lords, upon this subject I can speak with knowledge—I have been conversant in these matters, and draw my information from the greatest and most respectable naval authority, that ever existed in this country. I mean the late Lord Anson. The merits of that great man are not so universally known, nor his memory so warmly respected as he deserved. To his wisdom, to his experience, and care, (and I speak it with pleasure) the nation owes the glorious naval successes of the last war. The state of facts laid before parliament in the year 1756, so intirely convinced me of the injustice done to his character, that in spite of the popular clamours raised against him, in direct opposition to the complaints of the merchants, and of the whole city (whose favour I am supposed to court upon all occasions) I replaced him at the head of the admiralty; and I thank God that I had resolution enough to do so.—Instructed by this great seaman, I do affirm that forty ships of the line, with their necessary attendant frigates, to be properly manned, require forty thousand seamen.—If your Lordships are surpris'd at this assertion, you will be more so when I assure you, that in the last war, this country maintained eighty five thousand seamen, and employed them all.—Now my Lords the peace establishment of your navy, supposing it compleat, and effective, (which by the by ought to be known) is sixteen thousand men—Add to these the number newly raised, and you have about

about twenty five thousand men to man your fleet. I shall come presently to the application of this force, such as it is, and compare it with the services, which I know are indispensable.—But first my Lords, let us have done with the boasted vigor of the ministry.—Let us hear no more of their activity.—If your Lordships will recall to your minds the state of this country when Mahon was taken, and compare what was done by government at that time with the efforts now made in very similar circumstances you will be able to determine what praise is due to the vigorous operations of the present ministry. Upon the first intelligence of the invasion of Minorca, a great fleet was equipped, and sent out ; and near double the number of seamen collected in half the time taken to fit out the present force, which pitiful as it is, is not yet, if the occasion were ever so pressing, in a condition to go to sea. Consult the returns, which were laid before parliament in the year 1756. I was one of those who urged a parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of the ministry.—That ministry, my Lords, in the midst of universal censure, and reproach, had honour and virtue enough to promote the inquiry themselves. They scorned to evade it by the mean expedient of putting a previous question.—Upon the strictest inquiry it appeared, that the diligence they had used in sending a squadron to the Mediterranean, and in their other naval preparations, was beyond all example.

My Lords, the subject on which I am speaking seems to call upon me, and I willingly take this occasion to declare my opinion upon a question on which much wicked pains have been employed to disturb the minds of the people, and to distress government.—My opinion may not be very popular ; neither am I running the race of popularity—

I am myself clearly convinced, and I believe every man who knows any thing of the English navy will acknowledge, that, without impressing, it is impossible to equip a respectable fleet within the time in which such armaments are usually wanted. If this fact be admitted, and if the necessity of arming upon a sudden emergency should appear incontrovertible, what shall we think of those men, who, in the moment of danger, would stop the great defence of their country. Upon whatever principle they may act, the act itself is more than faction—it is labouring to cut off the right hand of the community. I wholly condemn their conduct and am ready to support any motion that may be made, for bringing those Aldermen, who have endeavoured to stop the execution of the admiralty warrants, to the bar of this house.—My Lords, I do not rest my opinion merely upon necessity.—I am satisfied that the power of impressing is founded upon uninterrupted usage—It is the *consuetudo Regni*, and part of the common-law prerogative of the crown. When I condemn the proceedings of some persons upon this occasion, let me do justice to a man, whose character, and conduct have been infamously traduced—I mean the late Lord Mayor, Mr. Trecothick—In the midst of reproach, and clamor he had firmness enough to persevere in doing his duty—I do not know in office a more upright magistrate; nor, in private life, a worthier man.

Permit me now, my Lords, to state to your Lordships the extent and variety of the service which must be provided for, and to compare them with our apparent resources.—A due attention to, and provision for these services, is prudence in time of peace;—in war it is necessity. Preventive policy, my Lords, which obviates, or avoids the injury, is far preferable to that vindictive policy, which aims

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at reparation, or has no object but revenge.—The precaution that meets the disorder, is cheap, and easy ; the remedy which follows it bloody and expensive.—The first great and acknowledged object of national defence, in this country, is to maintain such a superior naval force at home, that even the united fleets of France and Spain may never be masters of the channel. If that should ever happen, what is there to hinder their landing in Ireland, or even upon our own coast ?—They have often made the attempt ; in King William's time it succeeded. King James embarked on board a French fleet, and landed with a French army in Ireland.—In the mean time the French were masters of the channel, and continued so, until their fleet was destroyed by admiral Ruffel.—As to the probable consequences of a foreign army landing either in Great Britain, or Ireland, I shall offer your Lordships my opinion when I speak of the actual condition of our standing army.

The second naval object with an English minister, should be to maintain at all times a powerful western squadron.—In the profoundest peace it should be respectable,—in war it should be formidable.—Without it the colonies, the commerce, the navigation of Great Britain lie at the mercy of the House of Bourbon. While I had the honour of acting with Lord Anson, that able officer never ceased to inculcate upon the minds of his Majesty's servants, the necessity of constantly maintaining a strong western squadron ; and I must vouch for him, that while *he* was at the head of the marine, it never was neglected.

The third object indispensable, as I conceive, in the distribution of our navy, is to maintain such a force in the bay of Gibraltar as may be sufficient to cover that Garrison, to watch the motions of the Spaniards, and to keep open the communication with Minorca.—The ministry will not betray such
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want of information as to dispute the truth of any of these prepositions.—But how will your Lordships be astonished, when I inform you in what manner they have provided for these great, these essential objects?—As to the first, I mean the defence of the channel, I take upon myself to affirm to your Lordships that, at this hour, (and I beg that the date may be taken down, and observed,) we cannot send out eleven ships of the line so manned and equipped, that any officer of rank and credit in the service, shall accept of the command, and stake his reputation upon it.—We have one ship of the line at Jamaica, one at the Leeward Islands, and one at Gibraltar—yet, at this very moment, for ought the ministry know, both Jamaica and Gibraltar may be attacked, and if they are attacked, (which God forbid) they must fall.—Nothing can prevent it but the appearance of a superior squadron.—It is true that, some two months ago, four ships of the line were ordered from Portsmouth, and one from Plymouth, to carry a relief from Ireland to Gibraltar.—These ships, my Lord, a week ago were still in port.—If, upon their arrival at Gibraltar, they should find the bay possessed by a superior squadron, the relief cannot be landed, and, if it could be landed, of what force do your Lordships think it consists?—Two regiments, of four hundred men each, at a time like this, are sent to secure a place of such importance as Gibraltar!—a place which it is universally agreed, cannot hold against a vigorous attack from the sea, if once the enemy should be so far masters of the bay, as to make good a landing, even with a moderate force. The indispensable service of the lines requires at least four thousand men.—The present garrison consists of about two thousand three hundred; so that, if the relief should be fortunate enough to get on shore, they will

will want eight hundred men of their necessary complement.

Let us now my Lords, turn our eyes homewards. When the defence of Great Britain, or Ireland is in question, it is no longer a point of honour;—it is not the security of foreign commerce, or foreign possessions;—We are to contend for the very being of the state:—I have good authority to assure your Lordships that the Spaniards have now a fleet at Ferrol, compleatly manned and ready to sail, which we are in no condition to meet.—We could not this day send out eleven ships of the line properly equipped, and, and to-morrow the enemy may be masters of the channel. It is unnecessary to press the consequences of these facts upon your Lordships minds.—If the enemy were to land in full force either upon this coast, or in Ireland, where is your army? Where is your defence?—My Lords, if the House of Bourbon make a wise and vigorous use of the actual advantages they have over us, it is more than possible that, on this day month, we may not be a nation.—What military force can the ministry shew to answer any sudden demand?—I do not speak of foreign expeditions, or offensive operations. I speak of the interior defence of Ireland, and of this country. You have a nominal army of seventy battalions, besides guards and cavalry.—But what is the establishment of these battalions? Supposing they were compleat to the numbers allowed (which I know they are not) each regiment would consist of something less than four hundred men, rank and file.—Are these battalions compleat?—Have any orders been given for an augmentation, or do the ministry mean to continue them upon their present low establishment?—When America, the West Indies, Gibraltar, and Minorca are taken care of, consider, my Lords, what part
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of this army will remain to defend Ireland, and Great Britain? This subject, my Lords, leads me to considerations of foreign policy, and foreign alliance.—It is more connected with them than your Lordships may at first imagine. When I compare the numbers of our people, estimated highly at seven millions, with the population of France and Spain, usually computed at twenty-five millions, I see a clear, self-evident impossibility for this country to contend with the united power of the House of Bourbon, merely upon the strength of its own resources.—They, who talk of confining a great war to navel operations only, speak without knowledge, or experience.—We can no more command the disposition, than the events of a war;—wherever we are attacked, there we must defend.

I have been much abused, my Lords, for supporting a war, which it has been the fashion to call *my* German war.—But I can affirm, with a clear conscience, that that abuse has been thrown upon me by men, who were either unacquainted with facts, or had an interest in mis-representing them.—I shall speak plainly and frankly to your Lordships upon this, as I do upon ever occasion.—That I did in parliament oppose, to the utmost of my power, our engaging in a German war, is most true: and if the same circumstances were to recur, I would act the same part, and oppose it again.—But when I was called upon to take a share in the administration, that measure was already decided. Before I was appointed Secretary of State, the first treaty with the King of Prussia was signed, and not only ratified by the crown, but approved of, and confirmed by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament.—It was a weight fastened upon my neck. By that treaty the honour of the crown, and the honour of the nation were equally engaged. How I could recede from such an engagement;—How I could advise the crown

crown to desert a great prince in the midst of those difficulties, in which a reliance upon the good faith of this country had contributed to involve him, are questions I willingly submit to your Lordships candor. That wonderful man might perhaps have extricated himself from his difficulties without our assistance.—He has talents which, in every thing that touches the human capacity, do honour to the human mind.—But how would England have supported that reputation of credit, and good faith, by which we have been distinguished in Europe? What other foreign power would have sought our friendship? What other foreign power would have accepted of an alliance with us?

But, my Lords, though I wholly condemn our entering into any engagements which tend to involve us in a continental war; I do not admit that alliances with some of the German Princes are either detrimental, or useless. They *may be*, my Lords, not only useful but necessary.—I hope indeed I shall never see an army of foreign auxiliaries in Great Britain, we do not want it;—If our people are united;—if they are attached to the king, and place a confidence in his government, we have an internal strength sufficient to repel any foreign invasion.—With respect to Ireland, my Lords, I am not of the same opinion, —If a powerful foreign army were landed in that kingdom, with arms ready to be put into the hands of the Roman Catholics, I declare freely to your lordships, that I should heartily wish it were possible to collect twenty thousand German protestants, whether from Hesse or Brunswick, or Wolfenbottle, or even the unpopular Hanoverian, and land them in Ireland. I wish it, my Lords, because I am convinced that, whenever the case happens, we shall have no English army to spare.

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I have taken a wide circuit, my Lords, and trespassed, I fear, too long upon your Lordships patience. Yet I cannot conclude without endeavouring to bring home your thoughts to an object more immediately interesting to us, than any I have yet considered. I mean the internal condition of this country. We may look abroad for wealth, or triumphs, or luxury, but England, my Lords, is the main stay, the last resort of the whole empire. To this point every scheme of policy, whether foreign or domestic, should ultimately refer. — Have any measures been taken to satisfy, or to unite the people? — Are the grievances they have so long complained of removed? — Or do they stand not only unredressed, but aggravated? — Is the right of free election restored to the elective body? My Lords, I myself am one of the people. — I esteem that security and independence, which is the original birthright of an Englishman, far beyond the privileges, however splendid, which are annexed to the peerage. I myself am by birth an English elector, and join with the free holders of England, as in a common cause. — Believe me, my Lords, we mistake our real interest as much as our duty, when we separate ourselves from the mass of the people. — Can it be expected that Englishmen will unite heartily in defence of a government, by which they feel themselves insulted and oppressed? — Restore them to their rights. — *That* is the true way to make them unanimous. — It is not a ceremonious recommendation from the throne, that can bring back peace and harmony to a discontented people! That insipid annual opiate has been administered so long, that it has lost its effect. Something substantial, something effectual must be done.

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The public credit of the nation stands next in degree to the rights of the constitution,—it calls loudly for the interposition of parliament.—There is a set of men, my Lords, in the city of London, who are known to live in riot and luxury, upon the plunder of the ignorant, the innocent, the helpless—upon that part of the community, which stands most in need of, and best deserves the care and protection of legislature. To me, my Lords, whether they be the miserable jobbers of 'Change-alley, or the lofty Asiatic plunderers of Leadenhall-street, they are all equally detestable. I care but little whether a man walks on foot, or is drawn by eight horses, or six horses; if his luxury be supported by the plunder of his country, I despise and detest him.—My Lords, while I had the honour of serving his Majesty, I never ventured to look at the treasury but at a distance; it is a business I am unfit for, and to which I never could have submitted. The little I know of it has not served to raise my opinion of what is vulgarly called the *monied interest*. I mean that blood-sucker, that muckworm, which calls itself the friend of government,—that pretends to serve this or that administration, and may be purchased, on the same terms, by any administration; that advances money to government, and takes special care of its own emoluments. Under this description I include the whole race of commissaries, jobbers, contractors, clothiers, and remitters. Yet I do not deny that, even with these creatures some management may be necessary.—I hope, my Lords, that nothing I have said will be understood to extend to the honest, industrious tradesman, who is the middle rank, and have given repeated proofs that he prefers law and liberty to gold. I that class of men.—Much less would I be

thought to reflect upon the fair merchant, whose liberal commerce is the prime source of national wealth.—I esteem his occupation and respect his character.

My lords, if the general representation, which I have had the honour to lay before you of the situation of public affairs, has, in any measure, engaged your attention; your lordships, I am sure, will agree with me that the season calls for more than common prudence and vigour in the direction of our councils.—The difficulty of the crisis demands a wise, a firm, and a popular administration.—The dishonourable traffic of places has engaged us too long. Upon this subject, my lords, I speak without interest or enmity. I have no personal objection to any of the King's servants. I shall never be minister; certainly not without full power to cut away all the rotten branches of government. Yet, unconcerned as I truly am for myself, I cannot avoid seeing some capital errors in the distribution of the royal favour.—There are men, my Lords, who, if their own services were forgotten, ought to have an hereditary merit with the house of Hanover; whose ancestors stood forth in the day of trouble, opposed their persons, and fortunes to treachery and rebellion, and secured to his Majesty's family this splendid power of rewarding.—There are other men, my Lords, (*Shaking his fist at Lord Mansfield*) who, to speak tenderly of them, were not quite so forward in the demonstrations of their zeal to the reigning family; there was another cause, my Lords, and a partiality to it, which some persons had not, at all times, discretion enough to conceal, I know I shall be accused of attempting to revive distinctions. My Lords, if it were possible, I would abolish all distinctions. I would not wish the fa-
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vours of the crown to flow invariable in one channel. But there are some distinctions, which are inherent in the nature of things.—There is a distinction between right and wrong,—between whig and tory.

When I speak of an administration, such as the necessity of the season calls for, my views are large and comprehensive.—It must be popular, that it may begin with reputation.—It must be strong within itself, that it may proceed with vigour, and decision. An administration, formed upon an exclusive system of family-connexions, or private friendships, cannot, I am convinced, be long supported in this country. Yet, my Lords, no man respects, or values more than I do, that honourable connexion, which arises from a disinterested concurrence in opinion upon public measures, or from the sacred bond of private friendship and esteem. What I mean is, that no single man's private friendships, or connexions, however extensive, are sufficient of themselves, either to form, or to overturn an administration.—With respect to the ministry I believe they have fewer rivals than they imagine.—No prudent man will covet a situation so beset with difficulty and danger.

I shall trouble your Lordships with but a few words more. His Majesty tells us in his speech, that he will call upon us for our advice, if it should be necessary in the farther progress of this affair.—It is not easy to say whether or no the ministry are serious in this declaration; nor what is meant by the *progress* of an affair, which rests upon one fixed point. Hitherto we have not been called upon.—But, though we are not consulted, it is our right and duty as the King's great, hereditary council to offer him our advice.—The papers, mentioned in the noble Duke's motion, will enable

us to form a just and accurate opinion of the conduct of his Majesty's servants, though not of the actual state of their honourable negotiations. The ministry too, seem to want advice upon some points, in which their own safety is immediately concerned. They are now balancing between a war, which they ought to have foreseen, but for which they have made no provision, and an ignominious compromise.—Let me warn them of their danger.—If they are forced into a war, they stand it at the hazard of their heads. If, by an ignominious compromise, they should stain the honour of the crown, or sacrifice the rights of the people, let them look to their consciences, and consider whether they will be able to walk the streets in safety.



F I N I S.

